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ABSTRACT

A study investigated four issues in language usage in the Republic of Congo: (1) the extent of intergenerational language shift; (2) patterns in language repertoire; (3) patterns of language usage among four generations, four topics of conversation, and four different locations; and (4) language usage differences in age groups. The languages considered are French (the official language), two national languages (Lingala and Munukutuba), and mother tongues. Data are drawn from interviews with 253 individuals of different ages and genders and in different locations (Brazzaville, towns, and villages). Results indicate that differences in parental and child language use are least in villages, greatest in the city, with subjects changing more often from mother tongue to Lingala or Munukutuba than to French. Mother tongue knowledge was virtually universal, with knowledge of national languages somewhat less common and French knowledge least common. Younger subjects were more likely to know French or national languages. Distinctive patterns of language use in different domains and by different age groups were also revealed. It is concluded that: national and official languages are gaining in importance; men know and use more French than women; each language type is relatively more important in some domains than in others; and Congo is in linguistic transition. (MSE)

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Changing Patterns of Language Utilization in Republic of Congo

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1. *Introduction*

The Republic of Congo straddles the equator in Central Africa. Its capital, Brazzaville, occupies the right bank of the Congo River opposite Kinshasa, capital of Zaire. Congo is about the same size as Italy. It gained independence from French colonial rule in 1960.

Congo has a population of about two million people of mostly Bantu origin. Virtually all Congolese identify with one of about 50 ethnic groups and learn corresponding ethnic varieties as first languages or mother tongues. The population of Congo is shifting rapidly from rural to urban. In 1958, only one-third of the population was urban, while by 1980, it was two-thirds urban, and it is expected to be four-fifths urban by the year 2000 (INRAP, 1983: 18). Brazzaville is home to almost one-fourth of Congo's population, most of whom still claim an ethnic identity embodied in their mother tongues.

The government has just completed a transition from a one-party Marxist state to a multiparty democratic state. Government business and education have continued to be carried out in the official language French since independence, but Congo recognizes its two lingua francas, Lingala and Munukutuba (aka Kituba), as national languages. All three languages are heard on national radio and television. Lingala, spoken to the north of Brazzaville, grew up as a trade language along the Congo River, which is only navigable above Brazzaville. Munukutuba is spoken to the west and south of Brazzaville and grew up along the trade routes to the ocean, especially along the railroad, which was completed in 1934.

In any one location, residents are likely to be exposed to three layers of language: an inner, ethnic language; the outer, official language French; and an intermediate, national language. Depending on their particular circumstances, they may learn from one to three (or more) languages with varying degrees of proficiency. The languages of the multilingual citizens are then available for use in the domains of the community. Unless these three layers of language are reserved for functionally distinct domains as in diglossic situations, they will be in competition with each other and it is likely that changing patterns of language utilization will be observed. Indeed, it appears that Congo has been undergoing such a change and that many domains of usage are "leaking," thus creating a linguistic situation similar to what Fishman calls "bilingualism without diglossia," characterized by instability and transition. (Cf. Fasold, 1984: 41)

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the changing patterns of language utilization of the mother tongues, the two national languages, Lingala and Munukutuba, and the official language French. In order to do this, data will be reported on changes in languages claimed as mother tongue from one generation to the next, on the repertoires of languages spoken, and on the domains in which languages are used. Four specific research questions guide the research:

1.1. *The question of intergenerational language shift*: : What are the percentages of subjects (by age, sex, and residence) whose mother tongues differ from those of one or both parents?

1.2. *The question of language repertoires* : What are the percentages of subjects (by age, sex, and residence) who speak French, a national language, and/or mother tongue?

1.3. *The question of language-in-domain usage*: What are the percentages of subjects (by age and sex) who use French, a national language, and/or their mother tongue (a) with four generations of relatives, (b) when speaking about four topics, and (c) in four locations?

1.4. *The question of statistically significant age differences* : Are there significant differences between the age groups for each of the twelve language-in-domain variables specified in research question #3?

It is assumed that patterns can be inferred from comparisons of age groups, of the sexes, and of location of residence. The primary interest is in language change, which is inferred primarily from comparisons of age groups, although comparisons of the sexes and of locations of residence may also give added insights into patterns of language change.

This paper documents the repertoires of languages spoken and their usage in various representative domains. The variables of Age, Sex, and Residence are used to group the subjects. Significant patterns are sought across the categories of these variables. Patterns of change are assessed primarily by comparing measures of language use across three age groups (roughly "generations"). To compare the language repertoires across generations is to establish the existence of the prerequisite condition for language change, "[s]ince there will be no shift between parent and child without bilingualism among the former . . ." (Lieberson and McCabe, 1982: 83). To compare the languages used in various domains across generations is to focus on one of several factors which contribute to language shift, others being "population composition, government pressure, languages available for schooling, degree of fluency in the second language, intermarriage between mother-tongue groups, and others" (Lieberson and McCabe, 1982: 83).

The primary focus of this paper is the variation among three age groups: older than 50 (>50), between 30 and 50 (30-50), and younger than 30 (<30). Secondarily, variation across the sexes and across three residence locations is included in some analyses. The three residences are Brazzaville, towns, and villages. It was assumed that language differences across sex would reflect cultural differences in the roles of men and women (cf. for example, Lambert's (1971: 99) observation that French Canadian women "appear to be guardians of F[rench] C[anadian] culture, . . ."), while differences across location would reflect cultural changes resulting from urbanization and the abandonment of traditional village life. Brazzaville is the largest city in Congo, rivaled only by the economic capital, Pointe-Noire, with a population of about one-half that of Brazzaville (210,000 in 1980). Two towns, Mouyondzi and Makoua, were selected, each with less than 20,000 inhabitants. Mouyondzi is located about 200 km west of Brazzaville. Most inhabitants speak Bembe as a first language and use Munukutuba as a lingua franca. Makoua is located about 500 km north of Brazzaville. Most inhabitants speak Makoua as a first language and use Lingala as a lingua franca. Data were collected from villages outside Mouyondzi and Makoua as well as from a few locations in the Niari region, about 400 km from Brazzaville.

2. *Methodology*

2.1. *Data Collection*

Table 1 shows the distribution of the 253 persons interviewed by age, sex, and location. An attempt was made to find an approximately equal number of subjects for each of the eighteen cells (3 age groups by 2 sexes by 3 locations). Interviews were conducted with persons encountered while walking through residential neighborhoods and marketplaces in the various locations. A few were conducted in a school. The sample is biased in favor of men (136 to 117), of young people (98 under 30, 85 between 30 and 50, and 70 over 50), and of Brazzaville (121 in Brazzaville, 72 in towns, and 60 in villages).

<<INSERT TABLE I ABOUT HERE>>

The interviews were conducted by the author and seven of his male graduate students of linguistics from the Marien Ngouabi University in Brazzaville. The students were speakers of the local mother tongues of the locations where they interviewed as well as of one or both of the national languages and French. The interview language was chosen according to the preference of the interviewees or, in my case, their ability to speak French. About one-third of the interviews were in French. Ten percent were in Lingala or Munukutuba. Forty percent were in Bembe, Makoua, or Lari, the three dominant mother tongues in Mouyondzi, Makoua, and several *quartiers* of Brazzaville, respectively. The remainder were in seven other mother tongues or English (used by one graduate student with eleven of his students in a school where he was a teacher of English).

The Questionnaire. The questionnaire had five parts which are relevant to this paper. Subjects were asked for (1) basic demographic information such as age; sex; education; birthplace and mother tongue (understood as "first language") of self, mother, and father; (2) an evaluation on a four-point scale ("very well" to "not at all") of their ability to speak and understand French, Lingala, Munukutuba, their mother tongue, and other languages; (3) information on the language(s) used with four generations of family members (grandparents, parents, siblings, and children (if any)); (4) information on the language(s) used to discuss four topics (politics, religion, sorcery, and entertainment); and (5) information on the language(s) used in four locations (at home, at market, at church, and in school). Additional information was obtained in each of these areas but is not presented in this paper.

2.2. *Data Analysis*

The first three research questions are answered using frequency distributions, which compared percentages of subjects in six age-sex groups (men > 50, women > 50, men 30-50, women 30-50, men < 30, and women < 30) for the linguistic variables of interest. With each frequency analysis, a combined groups percentage is also given. (Note that these combined groups percentages

are based on all subjects combined and thus reflect a small bias in favor of the more numerous younger subjects. The effect of this bias is to increase the percentages for French and national language and decrease the percentages for mother tongue by at most one or two percentage points.)

The language-in-domain analyses (research question #3) also include totals of the three percentages of usage for each cell (age-sex group by domain). This is seen as a measure of the instability of language use in a domain. In a perfectly diglossic situation, only one language would be used in each domain. In a multilingual situation without diglossia, available languages compete with each other in the same domains. When subjects claim to use more than one language in a domain, the total of the percentages for the usage of French, national language, and mother tongue will exceed 100%. The larger the percentage total, the greater is the instability (diversity) of usage in that domain.

Five questions were answered using frequency distributions:

2.2.1. *The question of intergenerational language shift*

A comparison was made of mother tongues of self and parents across age-sex groups in each residence type (Brazzaville, Towns, Villages). The three residence types where interviews were conducted were assumed to represent significantly different sociolinguistic contexts.

2.2.2. *The question of language repertories*

A comparison was made of the language repertoire of subjects across each age-sex group for each of the three residence types (Brazzaville, Towns, Villages). Subjects were counted as speakers of a language if they rated themselves as speaking that language either "very well" or "somewhat." They were counted as non-speakers for self-ratings of "poorly" or "not at all."

2.2.3 *The questions of language-in-domain usage*

(a) across generations: A comparison was made of the usage of French, national language, and mother tongue across age-sex groups with four generations of family members.

(b) across topics: A comparison was made of the usage of French, national language, and mother tongue across age-sex groups to discuss four topics.

(c) across locations: A comparison was made of the usage of French, national language, and mother tongue across age-sex groups at four locations.

The fourth research question was answered by using the chi square statistic to look for statistically significant differences between the three age groups in their usage of French, national language, and mother tongue in twelve domains (four generations, four topics, four locations). Thirty-six chi-squares were computed (three languages by twelve domains). The chi square analyses were limited to two-way analyses with age as one variable and a language-domain combination as the other variable because of limitations on the number of

subjects sampled. Even with this limitation, two of the thirty-six analyses could not be reported because the expected values for one or more cells fell below the required five.

3. *Results*

The results are presented in two sections: frequency distributions and chi square analyses. Data relevant to research questions 1-3 are presented in five tables of frequency distributions (Tables 2-6). Each one shows the distribution of one or more variables across the six age-sex groups on the left of the table. Each cell has a percentage and, in parentheses, the number of subjects (N) upon which the percentage is based. The N varies slightly within groups due to missing data. Data relevant to research question 4 is presented in Table 7.

3.1. *Frequency Distributions*

3.1.1. *The question of intergenerational language shift*

What are the percentages of subjects (by age, sex, and residence) whose mother tongues differ from those of one or both parents? Table 2 shows that both the Residence variable and the Age variable, but not the Sex variable, are related to a pattern of mother tongue shift between parents and their children. There is no tendency for children to differ more from one parent than the other. The Residence variable shows a pattern of increased mother tongue difference between child and one or both parents as one moves from Villages to Towns to Brazzaville. This is seen clearly in the combined group data at the bottom of the table, where the percentage of difference from both parents increases from 1.7% in villages to 7.0% in towns to 16.7% in Brazzaville. The Age variable also shows a pattern of increased mother tongue differences between child and one or both parents, there being an increasing difference as one moves from older to younger subjects. When these two variables act together, one sees no differences among subjects over 50 in villages or towns and more than 33% difference among subjects under 30 in Brazzaville. In general, Table 2 suggests that younger, more urbanized subjects are more likely to have a different mother tongue from one or both parents than older, more rural subjects.

<<INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE>>

An analysis was done on the mother tongues of the 26 subjects who claimed different mother tongues from both parents. The result shows that such subjects mainly shifted to one of the two national languages rather than to French. Ten claimed Munukutuba, eight Lingala, but only two French . Of the remaining six, four claimed Lari, the mother tongue spoken by many in and around Brazzaville, and widely used as a lingua franca in parts of Brazzaville and two claimed Makoua as their mother tongue.

3.1.2. *The question of language repertoires*

What are the percentages of subjects (by age, sex, and residence) who speak French, a national language, and/or mother tongue? Table 3 summarizes the

language repertoires of the six age-sex groups from Brazzaville, towns and villages in terms of three levels of language: the official language French, either of the two national languages Lingala or Munukutuba, and one of the approximately fifty ethnic mother tongues. A subject is counted as a "speaker" of a language if he/she claimed to speak it "very well" or "somewhat well." Table 3 does not fully reflect the language repertoires of many subjects. Some spoke both national languages and some spoke ethnic languages other than their own mother tongue. In fact, the average number of languages spoken across all subjects was 3.0 and ranged from a low of 1.2 for village women over 50 to a high of 3.9 for women under 30 in Brazzaville.

<< INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE>>

Table 3 permits generalizations about variation in the knowledge of French and national languages across both the Residence variable (Brazzaville, towns, villages) and the Age and Sex variables (six age-sex groups). The knowledge of mother tongue is, as expected, virtually 100% across all subjects. The percentage of speakers of a national language exceeds that of French in all but two comparisons, the gap being greatest among subjects 30 years and older in towns and villages. No woman over 50 claimed to be a speaker of French, while their male age mates ranged from one in seven (villages) to one in three (Brazzaville) as French speakers. French knowledge generally increased from village to town to Brazzaville and from older to younger, whereas knowledge of a national language was above 80% in most groups except again for women over 50.

3.1.3. *The questions of language-in-domain usage*

What are the percentages of subjects (by age and sex) who use French, a national language, and/or their mother tongue (a) with four generations of relatives, (b) when speaking about four topics, and (c) in four locations? Tables 4-6 compare the six age-sex groups with respect to their use of French, national language, and mother tongue in twelve domains: (a) four generations of relatives, (b) when speaking about four topics of conversation, and (c) in four locations. Subjects from villages, towns, and Brazzaville are combined in these tables.

Table 4 compares the usage of French, national language and mother tongue across four generations of relatives by the six age-sex groups. The use of the mother tongue with all four generations of relatives exceeds that of French or national language for all age-sex groups, but the gap between mother tongue usage and French or national language usage narrows both as one moves from speaking-with-grandparents to speaking-with-one's-children and as the speakers become younger. If one compares the figures at the top left corner (older people speaking with grandparents and parents) to the figures in the bottom right corner (younger people speaking with siblings and children), one sees a decrease in the mother tongue usage and an increase in the usage of French and national language. In most comparisons, the use of national language exceeds that of French.

<<INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE>>

The percentage totals for each of the 24 cells of Table 4 reveal increases for all age-sex groups as one moves from grandparents to parents to siblings and children. The greatest instability (or diversity of usage) is among men and women under 30 years when speaking with siblings or children. There is no obvious sex difference in this measure except that older women show more stability in usage than older men.

Table 5 compares the usage of French, national language and mother tongue by the six age-sex groups to discuss four topics: politics, religion, sorcery, and entertainment. The use of language varies according to topic under discussion. French is generally used more to discuss politics and religion than to discuss other subjects except by women over 50 who, as seen previously, don't have French in their repertoires. Men in each of the three age groups use more French for all four of these topics than do their female age mates. Sorcery as a topic draws the highest percentages of mother tongue usage presumably because it is most embedded in local ethnic culture. The use of national language is greater in discussions of religion than for other topics but people 30 years and older still use their mother tongues more than a national language when talking about religion.

<<INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE>>

The percentage totals reveal considerable instability in language use across all age-sex groups and domains except for the domain of sorcery. As in Table 4, men and women under 30 years show the greatest instability in language choice for the four domains investigated. Unlike Table 4, men show greater instability of usage than their female age mates for twelve comparisons (three age groups x four topics).

Table 6 compares the usage of French, national language and mother tongue by the six age-sex groups in four locations: home, market, church and school. Each of the three language levels plays a dominant role in one setting: the mother tongue at home, the national languages at market, and French in school. French and national languages play a small role at home. Mother tongue is used along side a national language at the market by more than half of the people interviewed. Only a small number of subjects over 50 attended school. The women in this group stand out in their continued use of mother tongue rather than French at school. The church domain seems to invite the most equal usage of all three levels of language, though there are still differences in age and sex. About 50% of all subjects used both national language and mother tongue at church and almost 50% of men 50 years and younger use French in this domain.

<<INSERT TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE>>

The percentage totals reveal greater instability for the market and church domains than for the home and school domains. Older and younger men, but not those between 30 and 50 years, continue to show greater instability in language choice than their age mates. Unlike the previous two tables, there seems to be no marked age trend in these four domains.

3.2. *Chi Square Analyses: The question of statistically significant age differences*: Are there significant differences between the age groups for each of the twelve language-in-domain variables in research question #3?

Table 7 presents 34 chi squares which assess the independence of the Age variable and each of the 36 variables based on language use in a domain, i.e. French-with-Grandparents, National-Language-with Grandparents, French-at-Market, Mother-Tongue-in-Discussions-of Sorcery, etc. (Two are missing because some of the expected values contained cells with less than 5, which invalidates the results.) The Sex and Residence variables were not included in this analysis. Significance levels are indicated by one to three asterisks for $p < .05$, $p < .01$, and $p < .001$, respectively. They support the claim that the age variable is not independent of the language-in-domain variable. In only four cases were the chi squares non-significant (ns). Of the remaining 30 cases, four were significant at $p < .05$, fifteen were significant at $p < .01$, and eleven were significant at $p < .001$. This strongly supports the conclusion that there are significant differences among the three age groups with respect to most of the language-in-domain variables. A review of the post hoc cell contributions (not shown in table) for each of the significant results shows that subjects over 50 made the largest contributions to the magnitude of the chi squares in seven of the 12 French usage domains, giving statistical support to the observation that this group uses less French than the other two age groups. In seven of the 12 national language usage domains, the subjects under 30 make the greatest contributions to the chi squares, indicating that the greater usage of national languages by those under 30 distinguishes them from the two older groups. And finally, in 10 of the 12 mother tongue usage domains, it is the greater use of the mother tongue by those over 50 that contributes most to the chi square values.

<<INSERT TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE>>

4. *Conclusions and Discussion*

The purpose of this paper was to describe the changing patterns of language utilization of the mother tongues, the two national languages, Lingala and Munukutuba, and the official language French. The first two research questions looked at intergenerational language shift and language repertoire. The third research question concerned language-in-domain usage. The fourth research question asked whether the differences between age groups in the twelve language-in-domain variables were significant.

The results support the following conclusions:

4.1. *Increasing importance of national and official languages*.

The importance of the two national languages and French is increasing at the expense of local ethnic languages (mother tongues) both among younger subjects and in more urbanized residences. This conclusion is supported by the intergenerational language shift analysis, the language repertoire analysis, and the language-in-domain analysis. First, both younger subjects as well as

subjects in towns and Brazzaville are more likely to claim a different mother tongue from one or both parents. Lieberson (1980, p.17) stresses the importance of "cross-tabulating the mother tongue of parents with that of their offspring," when documenting language shift. This tendency is most pronounced among young subjects in Brazzaville, where more than one-third report such a difference.

Second, the language repertoires of younger subjects generally include a national language and French in addition to the mother tongue. The knowledge of French has jumped dramatically among women under 30 compared to women over 30. The expanded language repertoires enable speakers to choose from an array of languages in each domain. In urban settings, where people are more likely to encounter speakers of different mother tongues, interactions are more likely to take place in a common national language or French.

The third support for this conclusion comes from the twelve domain analyses where the Age variable consistently relates to changes in language-in-domain. In the four domains of speaking-with-relatives (Grandparents, Parents, Siblings, and Children), both age-of-subject and age-of-person-spoken-to show the same pattern of increasing use of French and national language and decreasing use of mother tongue. Although the percentage of users of mother tongue exceeds the percentages of users of French or national language in all 24 comparisons, the gap has decreased from a maximum of 100% in older women to a minimum of 9% in younger men. All subjects tend to use more French and national language with younger relatives. And younger subjects do so more than older subjects.

4.2. *Greater knowledge and use of French among men*

Men both know and use more French than do women. This conclusion is supported by the language repertoire analysis (knowledge) and the domain analyses (use). A higher percentage of men over 30 in all residence locations claim knowledge of French than do their female age-mates. This difference is not seen in subjects under 30, where more than two-thirds of all subjects claim a speaking knowledge of French. One possible explanation for this finding is the increase in education, which is conducted in French. No woman over 50 years claimed even an elementary school degree, while 35% of women 30-50 years and 85% of women under 30 years do. Twenty-one percent of men over 50 years, 64% of men 30-50 years, and 97% of men under 30 years claimed an elementary school degree. The gap between men and women in education, at least at the lowest level, seems to be narrowing and seems to relate the greater equality of French knowledge among younger subjects.

Men of all ages, however, use French more than their female age-mates in all twelve domains. This generalization holds true even for subjects under 30, where knowledge of French appears equal. In fact, more than twice as many men as women under 30 claim the use of French in five of twelve domains. The most striking difference is in the market where 23.1% of the young men use French compared to only 2.2% of the young women.

4.3. *Changes in language importance by domain and age*

The language-in-domain analyses demonstrate both that the importance of French, national language, and mother tongue varies with domain, but also that

there are significant quantitative shifts in the language choices being made in each domain when age groups are compared. Thus these analyses support the first conclusion above.

Each language type is relatively more important in some domains than in others. By comparing the percentages of usage in all twelve domains, one can identify the most important domains for each of the three language types. In this analysis, the mother tongues are seen as most important in the domains of speaking with the four generations of relatives, the topic Sorcery, and the location At Home. The national languages find their strongest domain in the location At Market and their second strongest in the location At Church. The topic Religion is the third strongest domain for the national languages. French, the official language used in education and politics, is, not surprisingly, strongest in the location In School and second strongest for the topic Politics.

The association of each language type with certain domains is supported by the fact the alternative languages are generally weaker in the same domains. The strongest domains for the mother tongues are domestic and the percentages of their use are greater than those of the national languages or French. Similarly the domain of greatest use of the national languages is the location At Market where the mother tongues are also strong, but the percentages of use of the national languages exceeds those of the mother tongues for all age-sex groups except older women. French's strongest domain is the location At School, where it is used more than its two competitors by all except, again, the older women.

The overall pattern of the domain analysis is that the mother tongues are strongest in generally domestic domains, the domains of the most ethnic, inner self: At Home, speaking with relatives or speaking about the topic of Sorcery. The official language French is strongest in the domains that are most influenced by the colonial past, education and politics. One might consider these to be the least ethnic and to belong to an outer layer of the self. Finally the two national languages are strongest in the domains that go beyond the inner ethnic identity but remain Congolese, relatively uninfluenced by the French colonial past. These can be interpreted as a middle layer, a buffer zone between the inner, ethnic layer of mother tongues and the outer layer of French. Their dominance in the market is symbolic of their role as mediator between ethnicities and perhaps as a future Congolese medium of national unity similar to the role of Swahili in Tanzania.

4.4. *Language diversity within domains as measure of instability*

The instability (diversity) of language use in all domains by speakers in all age-sex groups supports the conclusion that Congo is a country in linguistic transition. The trend shows an increase in national language (Lingala and Munukutuba) and official language (French) at the expense of the many mother tongues. This conclusion is supported by all the analyses. First, when Congolese speak a different mother tongue from their parents, they tend to choose one of the two national languages. Second, the knowledge of the national languages and French is increasing among younger subjects. Third, the national languages and French are being used more by younger subjects than older subjects in all domains. And finally, the competition of languages is greater among younger subjects than among older subjects.

Based on data gathered in the capital city, Brazzaville, two towns and a number of villages, the Republic of Congo is seen as a country in the process of linguistic transition. Most speakers are multilingual and the three language categories discussed in this paper compete with each other in all domains for most age-sex groups. In terms of Fishman's (1971:30-31) classification, Congo seems to be a Type A nation in which no Congolese language "can *currently* serve integrative functions at the *nationwide* level" (emphasis in original). French serves nationist functions of government and education, yet Congo is a country which has adopted two Congolese lingua francas as national languages and these are being used increasingly in most domains and are spoken by more speakers than is French. They are also used, along with French, on the radio for news and other programs. Thus Congo can also be seen as partly like a Type B nation, except that Type B nations have selected "a single indigenous . . . language to serve as national language [which contributes to an] ideology of authenticity or identity based upon broader kinship, broader custom and broader cause" (Fishman 1977: 39). Congo's two national languages have little geographical overlap and it is unlikely that a choice could be made in the near future for one over the other. Recent political events demonstrate the continued ethnic loyalties in the formation of the new political parties since the country's transition to multiparty democracy in 1991. The question for the future of Congo and of many other African countries is the outcome of the linguistic transition away from the traditional dominance of many local mother tongues.

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TABLE 1. Frequency Distribution of Interviewees by Age, Sex, and Location.

	Brazzaville	Towns	Villages	Total
Men > 50	16	12	14	42
Women>50	11	8	9	28
Men 30-50	21	11	10	42
Women 30-50	23	12	8	43
Men < 30	27	15	10	52
Women < 30	23	14	9	46
Total	121	72	60	253

Table 2. Percentages (Ns) of men and women in three age groups compared for different mother tongue from mother, different mother tongue from father, and different mother tongue from both parents.

		RESIDENCE TYPE		
		BRAZZAVILLE	TOWNS	VILLAGES
AGE-SEX GROUPS				
Men > 50	Different Mother Tongue from Mother	12.5 (16)	0.0 (12)	0.0 (14)
	Different Mother Tongue from Father	6.3 (16)	0.0 (11)	0.0 (13)
	Different Mother Tongue from both Parents	0.0 (16)	0.0 (12)	0.0 (14)
Women>50	Different Mother Tongue from Mother	0.0 (11)	0.0 (8)	0.0 (9)
	Different Mother Tongue from Father	9.1 (11)	0.0 (8)	0.0 (9)
	Different Mother Tongue from both Parents	0.0 (11)	0.0 (8)	0.0 (9)
Men 30-50	Different Mother Tongue from Mother	14.3 (21)	20.0 (10)	0.0 (10)
	Different Mother Tongue from Father	14.3 (21)	30.0 (10)	0.0 (10)
	Different Mother Tongue from both Parents	4.8 (21)	10.0 (10)	0.0 (10)
Women 30-50	Different Mother Tongue from Mother	26.1 (23)	0.0 (12)	0.0 (8)
	Different Mother Tongue from Father	19.0 (21)	8.3 (12)	0.0 (8)
	Different Mother Tongue from both Parents	13.0 (23)	0.0 (12)	0.0 (8)
Men < 30	Different Mother Tongue from Mother	33.3 (27)	13.3 (15)	0.0 (10)
	Different Mother Tongue from Father	38.5 (26)	13.3 (15)	0.0 (10)
	Different Mother Tongue from both Parents	29.6 (27)	13.3 (15)	0.0 (10)
Women < 30	Different Mother Tongue from Mother	40.9 (22)	21.4 (14)	11.1 (9)
	Different Mother Tongue from Father	40.9 (22)	21.4 (14)	11.1 (9)
	Different Mother Tongue from both Parents	36.4 (22)	14.3 (14)	11.1 (9)
Combined Groups	Different Mother Tongue from Mother	24.2 (120)	9.9 (71)	1.7 (60)
	Different Mother Tongue from Father	23.9 (117)	12.9 (70)	1.7 (59)
	Different Mother Tongue from both Parents	16.7 (120)	7.0 (71)	1.7 (60)

Table 3. Percentages (Ns) of men and women from Brazzaville, Towns, or Villages in three age groups speaking French, a national language, and mother tongue.

		RESIDENCE TYPE		
AGE-SEX GROUPS		BRAZZAVILLE	TOWNS	VILLAGES
Men > 50	French	68.8 (16)	33.3 (12)	14.3 (14)
	National Language	73.3 (15)	100.0 (12)	85.7 (14)
	Mother Tongue	100.0 (15)	100.0 (12)	100.0 (14)
Women>50	French	0.0 (11)	0.0 (8)	0.0 (9)
	National Language	60.0 (10)	37.5 (8)	22.2 (9)
	Mother Tongue	100.0 (11)	100.0 (8)	100.0 (9)
Men 30-50	French	85.7 (21)	81.8 (11)	10.0 (10)
	National Language	95.0 (20)	90.9 (11)	80.0 (10)
	Mother Tongue	100.0 (20)	90.9 (11)	100.0 (10)
Women 30-50	French	68.2 (22)	33.3 (12)	0.0 (8)
	National Language	90.5 (21)	100.0 (12)	100.0 (8)
	Mother Tongue	100.0 (21)	100.0 (12)	100.0 (8)
Men < 30	French	92.6 (27)	73.3 (15)	80.0 (10)
	National Language	88.9 (27)	93.3 (15)	90.0 (10)
	Mother Tongue	100.0 (25)	100.0 (15)	100.0 (10)
Women < 30	French	100.0 (23)	78.6 (14)	71.4 (7)
	National Language	100.0 (23)	100.0 (14)	88.9 (9)
	Mother Tongue	100.0 (19)	100.0 (14)	88.9 (9)
Combined Groups	French	76.7 (120)	54.2 (72)	27.6 (58)
	National Language	87.9 (116)	90.3 (72)	78.3 (60)
	Mother Tongue	100.0 (111)	98.6 (72)	98.3 (60)

Table 4. Percentages* (Ns) of men and women in three age groups using French, a national language, and mother tongue with Grandparents , Parents , Siblings , and Children.

		Grandparents	Parents	Siblings	Children
Men > 50	French	0.0 (42)	0.0 (42)	10.3 (39)	17.9 (39)
	National Language	0.0 (42)	2.4 (42)	7.7 (39)	15.4 (39)
	Mother Tongue	97.6 (42)	97.6 (42)	97.4 (39)	84.6 (39)
		97.6	100.0	115.4	117.9
Women>50	French	0.0 (28)	0.0 (28)	0.0 (27)	0.0 (25)
	National Language	0.0 (28)	3.6 (28)	0.0 (27)	12.0 (25)
	Mother Tongue	100.0 (28)	100.0 (28)	100.0 (27)	96.0 (25)
		100.0	103.6	100.0	108.0
Men 30-50	French	0.0 (42)	2.4 (42)	25.0 (36)	36.8 (38)
	National Language	2.4 (42)	7.1 (42)	22.2 (36)	28.9 (38)
	Mother Tongue	92.9 (42)	85.7 (42)	80.6 (36)	60.5 (38)
		95.3	95.2	127.8	126.2
Women 30-50	French	0.0 (41)	4.9 (41)	5.9 (34)	19.4 (36)
	National Language	7.3 (41)	12.2 (41)	20.6 (34)	33.3 (36)
	Mother Tongue	90.2 (41)	85.4 (41)	94.1 (34)	66.7 (36)
		97.5	102.5	120.6	119.4
Men < 30	French	5.9 (51)	13.7 (51)	27.7 (47)	45.5 (11)
	National Language	13.7 (51)	15.7 (51)	34.0 (47)	45.5 (11)
	Mother Tongue	86.3 (51)	84.3 (51)	74.5 (47)	54.5 (11)
		105.9	113.7	136.2	145.5
Women < 30	French	2.3 (44)	11.4 (44)	13.2 (38)	32.0 (25)
	National Language	13.6 (44)	25.0 (44)	42.1 (38)	44.0 (25)
	Mother Tongue	84.1 (44)	84.1 (44)	78.4 (37)	68.0 (25)
		100.0	120.5	133.7	144.0
Combined Groups	French	1.6 (248)	6.0 (248)	14.9 (221)	23.6 (174)
	National Language	6.9 (248)	11.7 (248)	22.6(221)	27.6 (174)
	Mother Tongue	91.1 (248)	88.7 (248)	86.4 (220)	73.0 (174)
		99.6	106.4	123.9	124.2

* Percentage totals greater than 100% reflect the use of more than one language in the context. Percentage totals less than 100% reflect the use of some language other than French, national language, or subject's mother tongue in the context. Both factors may, of course, operate at the same time.

Table 5. Percentages* (Ns) of men and women in three age groups using French, a national language, and mother tongue to talk about Politics, Religion, Sorcery, and Entertainment.

		Politics	Religion	Sorcery	Entertainment
Men > 50	French	30.6 (36)	20.5 (39)	5.0 (40)	7.5 (40)
	National Language	27.8 (36)	30.8 (39)	10.0 (40)	27.5 (40)
	Mother Tongue	75.0 (36)	71.8 (39)	95.0 (40)	75.0 (40)
		133.4	123.1	110.0	110.0
Women>50	French	0.0 (21)	0.0 (24)	0.0 (26)	0.0 (25)
	National Language	9.5 (21)	8.3 (24)	3.8 (26)	8.0 (25)
	Mother Tongue	100.0 (21)	95.8 (24)	100.0 (26)	100.0 (25)
		109.5	104.1	103.8	108.0
Men 30-50	French	66.7 (39)	38.5 (39)	26.8 (41)	44.7 (38)
	National Language	28.2 (39)	38.5 (39)	17.1 (41)	26.3 (38)
	Mother Tongue	25.6 (39)	46.2 (39)	68.3 (41)	44.7 (38)
		120.5	123.2	112.2	115.7
Women 30-50	French	12.9 (31)	21.1 (38)	2.6 (38)	8.1 (37)
	National Language	32.3 (31)	31.6 (38)	13.2 (38)	24.3 (37)
	Mother Tongue	64.5 (31)	65.8 (38)	81.6 (38)	81.1 (37)
		109.7	118.5	97.4	113.5
Men < 30	French	84.3 (51)	52.1 (48)	22.9 (48)	54.9 (51)
	National Language	23.5 (51)	41.7 (48)	29.2 (48)	35.3 (51)
	Mother Tongue	33.3 (51)	43.8 (48)	77.1 (48)	45.1 (51)
		141.1	137.6	129.2	135.3
Women < 30	French	38.9 (36)	28.9 (45)	14.0 (43)	18.2 (44)
	National Language	47.2 (36)	57.8 (45)	27.9 (43)	54.5 (44)
	Mother Tongue	36.1 (36)	42.2 (45)	65.1 (43)	56.8 (44)
		122.2	128.9	107.0	129.5
Combined Groups	French	45.8 (214)	29.6 (233)	13.1 (236)	25.1 (235)
	National Language	29.0 (214)	37.3 (233)	18.2 (236)	31.5 (235)
	Mother Tongue	50.5 (214)	57.5 (233)	79.7 (236)	63.8 (235)
		125.3	124.4	111.0	120.4

* Percentage totals greater than 100% reflect the use of more than one language in the context. Percentage totals less than 100% reflect the use of some language other than French, national language, or subject's mother tongue in the context. Both factors may, of course, operate at the same time.

Table 6. Percentages* (Ns) of men and women in three age groups using French, a national language, and mother tongue at school, at market, at church, and in school.

		At Home	At Market	At Church	In School
Men > 50	French	11.9 (42)	11.9 (42)	11.1 (36)	75.0 (16)
	National Language	11.9 (42)	71.4 (42)	52.8 (36)	12.5 (16)
	Mother Tongue	92.9 (42)	59.5 (42)	61.1 (36)	25.0 (16)
		116.7	142.8	125.0	112.5
Women>50	French	0.0 (28)	0.0 (26)	0.0 (25)	14.3 (7)
	National Language	14.3 (28)	30.8 (26)	20.0 (25)	14.3 (7)
	Mother Tongue	92.9 (28)	84.6 (26)	84.0 (25)	71.4 (7)
		107.2	115.4	104.0	100.0
Men 30-50	French	25.0 (40)	19.0 (42)	42.1 (38)	87.1 (31)
	National Language	26.8 (41)	76.2 (42)	42.1 (38)	12.9 (31)
	Mother Tongue	65.9 (41)	38.1 (42)	36.8 (38)	9.7 (31)
		117.7	133.3	121.0	109.7
Women 30-50	French	17.1 (41)	0.0 (41)	13.9 (36)	58.8 (17)
	National Language	24.4 (41)	85.4 (41)	47.2 (36)	29.4 (!7)
	Mother Tongue	75.6 (41)	56.1 (41)	66.7 (36)	17.6 (17)
		117.1	141.5	127.8	105.8
Men < 30	French	17.6 (51)	23.1 (52)	50.0 (46)	88.9 (45)
	National Language	27.5 (51)	69.2 (52)	50.0 (46)	20.0 (45)
	Mother Tongue	78.4 (51)	40.4 (52)	34.8 (46)	6.7 (45)
		123.5	132.7	134.8	115.6
Women < 30	French	8.9 (45)	2.2 (46)	26.8 (41)	79.4 (34)
	National Language	35.6 (45)	63.0 (46)	53.7 (41)	17.6 (34)
	Mother Tongue	73.3 (45)	56.5 (46)	46.3 (41)	8.8 (34)
		117.8	121.7	126.8	105.8
Combined Groups	French	14.2 (247)	10.4 (249)	26.6 (222)	78.0 (150)
	National Language	24.2 (248)	68.3 (249)	45.9 (222)	18.0 (150)
	Mother Tongue	79.0 (248)	53.4 (249)	52.3 (222)	14.0 (150)
		117.4	132.1	124.8	110.0

* Percentage totals greater than 100% reflect the use of more than one language in the context. Percentage totals less than 100% reflect the use of some language other than French, national language, or subject's mother tongue in the context. Both factors may, of course, operate at the same time.

Table 7. Chi Squares for the age variable and 36 language-in-domain variables.

	Grandparents	Parents	Siblings	Children
French	NA	12.6**	6.7*	9.8**
National Language	12.6**	12.0**	23.3***	11.4**
Mother Tongue	8.9*	9.5**	15.7***	13.3**
	Politics	**Religion**	**Sorcery**	**Entertainment**
French	30.0***	14.3***	8.7*	22.9***
National Language	2.6 (ns)	12.2**	12.0**	12.4**
Mother Tongue	36.5***	22.3***	17.2***	19.5***
	At Home	**At Market**	**At Church**	**In School**
French	6.0(ns)	1.6(ns)	19.6***	8.3**
National Language	7.6*	10.9**	2.3(ns)	NA
Mother Tongue	12.0**	9.3**	13.2**	14.8***

NA indicates that the expected values contained cells with less than 5.
* = p< .05. ** = p<.01. *** = p<.001. ns = nonsignificant.